

# Living Conditions Improve for US Soldiers in Iraq

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First Cavalry Division Soldiers can expect a better living conditions in Iraq when they are deployed. The quality of life for Soldiers in Iraq has improved greatly from the first deployment to today. Deputy Staff Judge Advocate Major James Agar was in Baghdad for a reconnaissance mission in early December and said he was pleasantly surprised by the living conditions for soldiers in Iraq.

"Overall I would describe the living conditions as being pretty good actually," he said. "They were far superior to what they were six months ago."

Even though the living conditions vary at each forward operating base, each area has been improved, and Agar said most Soldiers are living in trailers equipped with air conditioning and heat.

"It's a typical trailer, with linoleum floors, wood paneling, a window and the whole nine yards," Agar said.

Another recent improvement was the addition of shower trailers.

"The shower trailers were a big deal because [before] only cold showers were being taken," he said. "Now there is ample shower space and lots of hot water. That is definitely a big morale booster."

Even though showers are no longer being rationed for Soldiers, there is still a shortage of flushable toilets.

"Get used to the idea of there being Port-a-Potties everywhere," Agar said. "That's probably the only downside to being there."

Soldiers are also getting



By Maj. James Agar, 1st Cavalry Division SJA

**Upper left: Soldiers shop at a Post Exchange in Baghdad. Lower left: Soldiers live in trailers like these pictured at Camp Victory North. Right: When soldiers 'want it their way' they can eat at the new Burger King in Baghdad.**

three hot meals a day. And although it is not home cooking, it is better than what Soldiers were eating six months ago.

"All in all, I must admit the food was pretty good," he said. "Certainly better than a [Meal Ready to Eat] there is no doubt about that."

Soldiers can also shop at Army and Air Force Exchange stores which carries snacks, toiletries and items for Army uniforms. Each FOB also has vendors who sell a variety of items.

"There are Iraqi merchants who come into FOBS and sell goods such as office supplies, electronic equipment, DVD's and a lot of the big-ticket items that AFFES is not carrying," Agar said.

Keeping up-to date with current events has never been easier for deployed Soldiers.

They can watch broadcasts from Soldiers Radio and Television, CNN, Fox News, ESPN and some of the major networks. Aside from television Soldiers can expect to hear familiar music while deployed not only through Army networks but also from Iraqi stations.

"Contemporary American music is being played over there in a very big way," he said.

Agar said Soldiers can keep in touch with their loved ones via the Internet and the many Internet cafes that have been set up for the troops.

Even though Soldiers have many more comforts of home, Agar said there are a few things Soldiers should remember to bring with them to Iraq. He suggests that Soldiers bring more than one flashlight, sunglasses, a voltage converter and a pair of old running shoes.

"I was really grateful I had my old running shoes with me," he said. "It was the best thing I packed."

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Oregon State at NM

**Hawaii Bowl:**  
Houston at Hawaii

**Motor City Bowl:**  
Northwestern at Bowling Green

**Insight Bowl:**  
Virginia Tech at Calif.

**Continental Tire Bowl:**  
Pittsburgh at Virginia

**Alamo Bowl:**  
Michigan State at Nebraska

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### Some Things to Pack:



**Sunglasses**  
**Old Running Shoes**  
**Flashlights**  
**Voltage Converter**